



FILE PHOTO Angel Reese, Atlanta Dream. May 9, 2026, Minneapolis.
John McClellan (John Mac) / Wikimedia Commons / CC BY-SA 4.0.

WHY THIS IS OUR FIRST STORY

I chose Angel Reese for Nuvara Media's first column because this story brings together what I care about: sports, Black life, unity, positivity and life itself. I want to bring old-school knowledge to the conversation while giving the next generation room to grow.

BY BROCK PHILLIPS

Give Angel Her Halo

Win or lose, Angel Reese's success and her humanity deserve respect.

01 / GIVE HER CREDIT NOW

Give Angel her halo now. Win or lose.

Angel Reese and the Atlanta Dream are two wins from a WNBA championship. As of October 21, Atlanta leads Golden State 2-1. Reese has recorded three straight Finals double-doubles, becoming, according to ESPN's Alexa Philippou, the youngest player to do that. ^[1] I want to see her finish the job. But I am not waiting for another trophy before recognizing what this young woman has accomplished.

Sometimes you can be successful and still finish second. You can improve, help your team go further and come up short of the biggest prize. The disappointment is real. So is the success that brought you there. An older generation ought to know the difference.

I watched Michael Jordan, Scottie Pippen and Dennis Rodman. We spent plenty of time talking about greatness. We ought to have learned enough to recognize a young player still developing hers.

Chicago traded Reese to Atlanta in April. Six months later, she is the WNBA's Defensive Player of the Year. In Game 2 of these Finals, she delivered 30 points and 16 rebounds. She joined a team that had already won 30 games in 2025, and she is helping it reach further. ^{[2][3][5]} Give her teammates their credit, too. Allisha Gray scored 18 in that game, Jordin Canada supplied 13 points and 10 assists, and Rhyne Howard set a Finals record with six steals. ^[5]

The accomplishments did not begin in Atlanta. Reese helped St. Frances Academy win four consecutive IAAM A Conference championships. She played at Maryland before transferring to LSU, helped win the 2023 national championship and earned Final Four Most Outstanding Player honors. In 2024, she graduated from LSU with a degree in interdisciplinary studies. ^{[6][7][8]}

We tell young people to work hard, get an education and make something of themselves. Here is a young Black woman doing those things. Last season's limitations do not have to become a life sentence.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

02 / GIVE ANGEL HER HALO

The real world follows her onto the court

Achievement has not protected Reese from racial abuse. The NCAA’s 2024-25 report identified her as receiving the most abuse among the athletes it monitored the previous year and described the unusually high volume of racist abuse directed at her.^[9] In April 2024, she spoke about death threats and being sexualized. She reminded people: “I’m still a human.”^[10] That should not require explaining. We cannot take young Black people out of the real world, put them in uniforms, and declare that the real world no longer matters. A paycheck does not erase racism, sexism or somebody’s right to speak.

When people demand that athletes keep politics outside, I ask whose politics they mean. In 2018, Laura Ingraham told LeBron James and Kevin Durant to “shut up and dribble.” In 2020, she defended Drew Brees’ right to express his views about anthem kneeling. After criticism, she affirmed every American’s right to speak. That later statement belongs in the record. So does the earlier difference in treatment.^[11]

Meanwhile, NASCAR’s own 2020 gallery featured Corey LaJoie’s “Trump 2020” race car. Electoral politics already had a place inside a sporting event.^[12] I question why Black athletes’ voices so often become the problem. A ticket buys admission to the game. It does not buy ownership of somebody’s voice.

The WNBA and its players’ union pushed back through action, creating a Social Justice Council and dedicating the 2020 season to social justice. Those women deserve credit for making space for their communities’ concerns.^[13]

Basketball judgment still has its place. In July 2025, Candace Parker put Reese in the C tier in a selected-player ranking, questioning her ability to carry a team while praising her rebounding and development. By October 2026, Parker acknowledged Reese’s growth and said, “I was wrong.”^{[17][18]} That matters. Recognizing growth includes recognizing somebody willing to update her judgment.

Rodman’s rebound totals drew criticism, too.^[15] His seven rebounding titles and five championships remind us what that work can contribute.^[14] If Reese misses, discuss the miss. If she recovers it, recognize the second chance she gives her team.^[16]

03 / GIVE ANGEL HER HALO

Keep the human being in the picture

I do not know Angel Reese. Never met her. Our paths may never cross. I will probably never meet Michael Jordan, either. I may never meet you, the person reading this. We can still recognize something good in one another.

I am looking from the outside. I see an accomplished young Black woman with intelligence, confidence, beauty and a future still taking shape. Man, I like what I see.

I know a young lady who loves Reese. She defends her with the same feeling I have seen grown men bring to defending Jordan. That young girl’s admiration deserves respect. Why should somebody she looks up to matter less than the heroes my generation grew up watching?

Reese does her thing the way she does her thing. Let that count. Why can’t we praise people when we see something worth praising?

In *The Crowned One*, I questioned putting so much hope into one sports figure that we overlook our children and communities. Jordan’s greatness did not remove our responsibility to them. Applause could never do that work for us. That principle still stands. Recognizing Reese should widen our attention to her teammates, to young women building their futures, and to children whose talents will lead somewhere beyond professional sports.

Her game can encourage a girl to practice. Her degree can encourage her to build a life beyond basketball. Expect effort and accountability. Leave room for growth. Tell young people their value does not disappear when the crowd stops cheering. That is how I mean this halo: earned recognition, with the whole person still in view.

And let me tell you how I would celebrate the Bayou Barbie. Get that girl her ten pounds of crawfish, man. Potatoes, corn and sausage. Put some shrimp on that plate, too. A cold beer on the side. And somebody better make the garlic butter. She earned that, bruh. Beautiful, intelligent, confident. A baddie, as the kids say.

A championship would add to her story. Second place could not take her education, growth or accomplishments away.

Pro Angel Reese all day long. Win or lose.

People give her her props. I’m giving her her halo.

REPORTING & SOURCES

Numbered citations and source names are clickable.

- 01 Sporting News: Game 3 and Finals record
- 02 Atlanta Dream: April 6 trade and team record
- 03 WNBA: 2026 Defensive Player of the Year
- 05 WNBA / AP: Finals Game 2
- 06 WMAR: St. Frances and four IAAM titles
- 07 LSU: college career and championship
- 08 LSU: graduation, May 2024
- 09 NCAA / Signify: abuse report, page 6
- 10 ASAP Sports: April 2024 press conference

- 11 Mediaite: Ingraham, James and Brees
- 12 NASCAR: 2020 race-car gallery
- 13 WNBA: Social Justice Council
- 14 Basketball Hall of Fame: Dennis Rodman
- 15 Washington Post: 1998 rebound dispute
- 16 Jr. NBA: rebounding and possession
- 17 On SI: Parker’s July 2025 assessment
- 18 Basketball Network: Parker’s later response